

## International Baccalaureate (IB): Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the IB Middle Years Program (MYP)?

The IB Middle Years Programme, for students aged 11 to 16, provides a framework of academic challenge that encourages students to embrace and understand the connections between traditional subjects and the real world, and become critical and reflective thinkers.

The programme:

- encourages **international-mindedness** in IB students, starting with a foundation in their own language and culture
- encourages a **positive attitude to learning** by challenging students to solve problems, show creativity and resourcefulness and participate actively in their communities
- reflects **real life** by providing a framework that allows students to see the connections among the subjects themselves, and between the subjects and real issues
- supports the development of **communication skills** to encourage inquiry, understanding, language acquisition, and to allow student reflection and expression
- emphasizes, through the **learner profile**, the development of the whole student—physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically.

The IB Middle Years Programme may be taught as a standalone programme but it is flexible enough to accommodate the demands of most national or local curriculums.

### What are the key components to an MYP curriculum?

The programme consists of eight subject groups integrated through five areas of interaction that provide a framework for learning within and across the subjects. Students are required to study their mother tongue, a second language, humanities, sciences, mathematics, arts, physical education and technology. In the final year of the programme, students also engage in a personal project, which allows them to demonstrate the understandings and skills they have developed throughout the programme.

Students and parents will develop an understanding of the IB learner profile. The ten aspirational qualities of the learner profile inspire and motivate the work of teachers, students and schools, providing a statement of the aims and values of the IB and a definition of what we mean by “international-mindedness”. IB learners strive to be inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk-takers, knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced and reflective.

Teachers organize the curriculum through the five **areas of interaction**:

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1. **Approaches to learning** is concerned with developing the intellectual discipline, attitudes, strategies and skills that will result in critical, coherent and independent thought and the capacity for problem solving and decision-making.
  2. **Community and service** starts in the classroom and extends beyond it, requiring students to participate in the communities in which they live. The emphasis is on developing community awareness and concern, a sense of responsibility, and the skills and attitudes needed to make an effective contribution to society.
  3. **Human ingenuity (formerly *Homo Faber*)** allows students to focus on the evolution, processes and products of human creativity. It considers their impact on society and on the mind. Students learn to appreciate the human capacity to influence, transform, enjoy and improve the quality of life. This area of interaction encourages students to explore the relationships between science, aesthetics, technology and ethics.
  4. **Environments** aims to make students aware of their interdependence with the environment so that they become aware of their responsibility, and may take positive, responsible action for maintaining an environment fit for the future.
  5. **Health and social education** prepares students for a physically and mentally healthy life, aware of potential hazards and able to make informed choices. It develops in students a sense of responsibility for their own well-being and for the physical and social environments. For example, a group of students in year 1 of the programme could learn about pure substances and mixtures in sciences (chemistry). As part of their laboratory activities, students apply simple techniques to separate different types of mixtures, including techniques for separating impurities from water.

### What approaches to assessment are used in an IB MYP?

Assessment is criterion-related, so students around the world are measured against pre-specified criteria for each subject group. Teachers may modify these criteria to be age-appropriate in the earlier years of the programme. Teachers set assessment tasks that are assessed internally in the school. External checks (either **moderation** or **monitoring of assessment** by IB examiners) are carried out on this internal assessment to ensure worldwide consistency of standards. For schools that require official IB certification for their students, moderation is carried out every year.

### What is the process for becoming an authorized IB MYP?

The IB MYP authorization process takes place over a minimum three year period. In the first year, the school engages in a self-study to determine their starting point for pursuing IB MYP authorization. Over the three years of authorization, various members of school leadership and faculty are sent to IB training to learn how to develop the program. In the second year, the school develops curriculum and begins development of curriculum and practices. IB will determine in the third year if the school has reached a level of development that warrants a site evaluation visit. The school can be authorized after the site evaluation team if the school shows evidence that they are ready to fully implement the IB MYP.